

URBAN DISTRICT OF ASHBURTON

Sanitary Officers—

Medical Officer of Health E. A. ELLIS
 Sanitary Inspector A. FALLOWS

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1938

To the Chairman and Members of the Urban District Council of Ashburton.

GENTLEMEN,—

The following report summarises the general health of the district, and contains particulars of births and deaths, the zymotic and other notifiable diseases, and of sanitary work carried out during the year 1938.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Area of District ...	...	...	...	...	6,781 acres
Registrar General's estimate of resident population (1938)					2,395
Number of inhabited houses	...	...	...		703
Rateable value on 31st December, 1938	...	...		£	12,730
Product of a penny rate	...	...		£	49 2s. 8d.

The district is partly urban and partly rural in character, agriculture being the principal industry.

BIRTHS AND DEATHS

		TOTAL			
Live Births	Legitimate ...	26		Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	11.27
	Illegitimate ...	1		" "	"
Stillbirths	Legitimate ...	2		Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births	74.0
			M. F.		
Deaths	...	37	20	Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	12.2
				Deaths from diseases and accidents of pregnancy and childbirth : from sepsis	0
				" other cause	0
Death Rate of infants under one year of age :—					
All infants per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	...	37.0
Legitimate infants per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	...	37.0
Deaths from	Measles (all ages) ...	...	...	...	0
	Whooping Cough (all ages) ...	...	...	...	0
	Diarrhoea (under two years of age) ...	...	...	...	0
	Influenza ...	...	...	...	0
	Tubercular disease of the lungs ...	...	...	...	1
	Other Tubercular diseases ...	...	...	...	0
	Cancer ...	...	...	...	4
	Diabetes ...	...	...	...	2
	Cerebral hemorrhage ...	...	...	...	5
	Heart disease ...	...	...	...	9
	Other circulatory diseases ...	...	...	...	4
	Bronchitis ...	...	...	...	3
	Pneumonia ...	...	...	...	0
	Other respiratory diseases ...	...	...	...	0
	Appendicitis ...	...	...	...	1
	Congenital causes ...	...	...	...	0
	Ill-defined causes ...	...	...	...	2
	Acute and Chronic Nephritis ...	...	...	...	0
	Senility ...	...	...	...	1
	Premature birth ...	...	...	...	1
	Violence ...	...	...	...	2
	Suicide ...	...	...	...	0
	Other defined diseases ...	...	...	...	2
	Unknown ...	...	...	...	1
	Aneurysm ...	...	...	...	0
	Puerperal fever ...	...	...	...	0
	Other digestive diseases ...	...	...	...	1
	Cirrhosis of liver ...	...	...	...	0

NURSING SERVICES. (a) General.

There is a resident District Nurse who works under the Devon County Nursing Association.

There is no Infant Welfare or Maternity Centre.

Maternity Cases which are likely to present difficulty and cases of Puerperal Pyrexia can be sent to Hospital at Exeter.

(b) Infectious Diseases.

Cases of Tuberculosis are treated, if considered suitable, in the County Tuberculosis Institutions.

Infectious cases are sent, when necessary, to the Isolation Hospital at Newton Abbot.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The County Authorities undertake the examination or analysis of clinical material (sputum, swabs, etc.), milk and foodstuffs.

LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

The Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890. Part III. adopted on the 4th November, 1898, came into operation on the 1st January, 1899.

Part IV. adopted on the 5th May, 1921, came into operation on the 25th June, 1921.

The Public Health Act, 1925. Parts II. (except Sections 21 and 22), III. (except Section 44) and IV. were adopted on the 3rd February, 1927, and came into operation on the 15th March, 1927.

The Notification of Births Act, 1907. The whole Act operates within the district in view of the adoption by the County Council of Devon for the whole county area.

The following powers have been conferred upon the Council by Orders of the Local Government Board or the Minister of Health:—

Local Government Act, 1894

Powers.	Date of Order
Section 13 (2) and 14	10th August, 1898
Section 8 (1) (a) (b) (h) and (i)	10th October, 1927

Byelaws made by the Council have been confirmed by the Minister or his predecessors the Local Government Board with respect to the following:—

Subject	Date of Confirmation
Nuisances	14th March, 1900
Slaughter-houses	19th June, 1899
New Streets and Buildings	4th December, 1925
Common Lodging Houses	30th May, 1935

HOSPITAL.

The town has a well-equipped Cottage Hospital, supported by voluntary subscriptions; a contributory scheme is in operation for maintenance in hospital.

The Hospital is managed by a local Committee (voluntary). It is used for all general purposes (other than for infectious diseases and infants) and contains 16 beds.

Venereal cases are, if willing, sent to Clinics at Exeter or Plymouth. The Local Authority supplies antitoxin.

The Council have not taken any action in connection with Diphtheria Immunisation.

Institutional Provision for Unmarried Mothers, etc. There is institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate and homeless children at Newton Abbot.

Ambulance. There is a wheeled ambulance in the town. The nearest motor ambulance is at Newton Abbot (7 miles away).

Midwives. Only one midwife practises in the district.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Water. The supply to the Town is satisfactory both as to quantity and quality. Bacteriological and chemical analyses have been made three times during the year and 2 have been satisfactory. In one analysis a trace of lead was detected. The source of this was found and it has now been eliminated.

Sewerage. The present system of disposal—land irrigation—is not satisfactory. The River Dart Conservators have informed the Council that the River is being polluted and have asked for some remedial action to be taken. The Council are giving the matter their consideration and a scheme has been prepared by their Sanitary Engineer.

Swimming Pool. There is a Pool, which is open to the public, at one of the Hotels in the town. The water for the Pool is taken from the mains and undergoes an efficient system of filtration and purification.

Schools. The sanitary conditions and water supply of the schools in the district are satisfactory.

2. *Remedy of defects during the Year without Service of Formal Notices :—*

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	5
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3. *Action under Statutory Powers during the Year :—*

A—Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	0
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—	
(a) By owners	0
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	0

B—Proceedings under Public Health Acts :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	7
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—	
(a) By owners	7
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	0

C—Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	9
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ...	5

D—Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	0
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	0

4. *Housing Act, 1936—Part IV.—Overcrowding :—*

(a)—(i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	0
(ii) Number of families dwelling therein	0
(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein	0
(b)—Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	1
(c)—(i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	1
(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases	6

E. A. ELLIS,

Medical Officer of Health.